



Questions & Answers on NOAA Fisheries Service Final Hood Canal Chum Endangered Species Act Recovery Plan

(May 24, 2007)

Q: What is an Endangered Species Act recovery plan?

A: Under the Endangered Species Act, NOAA Fisheries Service is required to prepare recovery plans for all ESA-listed species. The recovery plan provides a roadmap for actions and funding priorities needed to remove the species from the list and ESA protections. NOAA Fisheries Service is preparing recovery plans for all ESA-listed salmon and steelhead.

Q: What is NOAA Fisheries' approach to developing ESA recovery plans for salmon and steelhead?

A: Our approach to recovery planning is to support collaborative efforts between local, state, tribal, and federal entities with the focus on local participation in recovery. As the lead ESA agency for listed salmon, NOAA Fisheries Service assists local participants in developing their respective portions of recovery plans, helps compile them into a comprehensive recovery plan for the listed stock, and reviews them to assure that they meet ESA statutory requirements and merit adoption as ESA recovery plans.

Q: What is the Hood Canal Chum Recovery plan?

A: This recovery plan is a road map on how best to restore Hood Canal summer chum, a population of salmon listed under the ESA in 1999. It consists of two documents: the Hood Canal and Eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca Summer Chum Salmon Recovery Plan prepared by the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC), and the NOAA Fisheries Service Final Supplement to that plan. The supplement clarifies how the HCCC Plan satisfies ESA recovery plan requirements and addresses additional elements needed to comply with those requirements.

Q: What are the goals of the HCCC plan and how does it propose to attain those goals?

A: The overall goal of this plan is to achieve recovery and delisting of summer-run chum salmon in Hood Canal and the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca. The HCCC Plan's recovery strategy focuses on habitat protection and restoration throughout the geographic range of this population. The plan incorporates harvest management and hatchery supplementation programs that are ongoing.

Q: What science was used in the HCCC plan?

A: The HCCC incorporated the best available scientific information, local knowledge, and historical understanding of salmon biology in the recovery plan. For example, the HCCC based its recovery strategy on NOAA Fisheries' Technical Recovery Team recommendations for determining when a population is viable, or has a high probability of persistence into the future. The HCCC Plan draws extensively on the research and publications of the Summer Chum Salmon Conservation Initiative, an ongoing planning forum initiated in 2000 by the Point No Point Treaty Tribes and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The plan includes actions that address all threats to Hood Canal

summer chum. The path to recovery will be monitored and adjusted through an adaptive management program. It's designed to capitalize on successes and use information gained to shape future efforts. The reality of salmon recovery is that some efforts will be more effective than others. Therefore recovery plans need to incorporate monitoring and adaptive management to ensure that recovery goals are achieved.

Q: Who is responsible for implementing the plan and when will implementation begin?

A: Many federal and state agencies, local and tribal governments, and other entities are slated to implement actions in the plan. Implementation should begin immediately by all entities involved. The plan should be used as a collective organizing framework for federal and non-federal programs that are funding recovery actions. It's a way to prioritize cost-effective actions and identify additional resources necessary to achieve recovery. The HCCC will coordinate implementation of the plan.

Q: How will NOAA Fisheries Service use the HCCC plan?

A: By endorsing and adopting this locally developed recovery plan, NOAA is making a commitment to implement the actions in the plan for which it has authority, to work cooperatively on implementation of other actions, and to encourage other federal agencies to implement recovery plan actions for which they have responsibility and authority. NOAA Fisheries Service will also encourage the state of Washington to seek similar implementation commitments from state agencies and local governments.

Q: Will the partnership between NOAA Fisheries and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council and the state of Washington continue?

A: Yes. NOAA Fisheries will continue to work with Washington and the HCCC in moving to the next phase of recovery implementation. We have a lot of work to do and have already done much to recover salmon. Now we must heighten these efforts and forge partnerships for the future. The complex task of salmon recovery will be successful only if it's well-integrated and crosses barriers between all groups and individuals interested in recovering healthy salmon and steelhead in the Northwest.